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RR RUEHCN RUEHGH
DE RUEHGZ #0193 0910727
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R 010727Z APR 09
FM AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0378
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0259
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 0082
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 0080
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0080
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0113
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 0067

UNCLAS GUANGZHOU 000193

STATE FOR CA/VO, CA/EX
ALSO FOR EAP/CM,
BEIJING FOR EXEC, CG, NIV, ECON, FCS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CVIS](#) [CMGT](#) [ECON](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: VISA REFERRAL PROGRAM: GUANGZHOU AMCHAM NEARLY FLAWLESS

¶1. (U) Summary: A recent validation study conducted by the Guangzhou Fraud Prevention Unit (FPU) with the assistance of the Office of Fraud Prevention Programs revealed that post's American Chamber of Commerce of South China (AmCham) referral program continues to function almost flawlessly. As the Consulate's most visible example of our commitment to facilitate legitimate business travel, the AmCham referral program provides not only convenience to travelers and companies, but also ease of adjudication for consular officers. Between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008 post issued 2,886 AmCham referrals; post confirmed that 2,882 have returned to China after their business trips. Post confirmed that 99.86% of VRP applicants returned to China after completion of their business trips to the United States. Trends in business travel related to the economic downturn in southern China will be reported separately. End summary.

¶2. (U) Background: Since first established in 1997, Guangzhou's AmCham referral program has been extremely beneficial to both Post and the local American business community. AmCham has more than 1,650 members, including many who participate in the Visa Referral Program (VRP). To qualify for AmCham membership a company must be principally owned by a U.S. citizen and have an office in China. At the time of adjudication VRP applicants present an invitation letter, an invitation letter, and their rsum. AmCham applicants are allotted twenty interviews slots each afternoon, in addition to drop-box service available for those who have traveled to the U.S. within the past year.

¶3. (U) AmCham deals directly with the company sponsoring the trip, not with the applicants. AmCham handles all cases submitted through the VRP. After ensuring that all documents are in order, the applications are transferred by courier to the NIV section. Post then adjudicates AmCham referrals separately each afternoon. In order for companies to maintain membership in the referral program, AmCham requires the company to submit a copy of the return page of the applicant's passport within one week of completion of the business trip.

¶4. (U) In a high fraud locale like Guangzhou, adjudicating officers appreciate the confidence created by membership in AmCham employment, as well as AmCham's follow up confirmations. AmCham values the expedited processing and the cachet of having a special channel for members to submit visa applications. Between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008, post received 2,902 referrals through AmCham; post approved 99.48% of the VRP program's applicants.

¶5. (U) Methodology: FPU used the Ad Hoc Report Tool (ART) to pull records of all VRP issuances and refusals from July 1, 2007, until June 30, 2008. Post then requested assistance from FPP to check ADIS records for entry, exit, and change of status for each applicant. ADIS records are sometimes incomplete, for example, airline employees that buy planes in the United States and then fly

them back to China may not be recorded as departing the United States. Thirty-seven travelers did not show a record of departure. FPU made cold calls to verify their whereabouts.

¶ 6. (U) Results: Post confirmed that 99.86% of VRP applicants returned to China after completing their business trips to the United States. Only four remain inconclusive because of a lack of current contact information. Post is working with AmCham to locate these applicants.

¶ 7. (U) Conclusion: The AmCham referral program continues to be an extremely effective tool in Post's outreach to the local American business community. The extremely high rates of both approvals and returns demonstrate the successful partnership post has developed with AmCham through this program. In the future Post will continue to work closely with AmCham to improve and enhance the program.

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